

REMARKS

Claims 7-10 have been amended. Claims 7-10 remain in the application. Claims 1-6 were previously canceled. It should be appreciated that the amended claims merely clarify the invention described in the specification, and do not add new matter.

The Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for courtesies extended during the phone interview of June 29, 2006.

Claims 7-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The Applicant has amended the claims accordingly and respectfully submits that claims 7-10 overcome this rejection.

Claims 7 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Korean Patent 2003031219A ('219). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The Korean patent publication KR2003031219A discloses a knob 10 for controlling the air vent of an automobile. The knob includes a recess for receiving the vane 18. An inner surface of the knob includes a notched portion. A shock absorbing material 14 is disposed within the notch in the knob, so that a rear side of the material in the knob is in contact with a front side of the vane 18 so that the pad presses against the vane in order to absorb shock when sliding the knob from side to side. The Korean publication does not disclose a vane having a rear edge with one notch for receiving a compressively resilient pad that constantly and continuously applies a resistive force to the vane with respect to the knob, as disclosed by the Applicant.

In contradistinction, claim 7 discloses a vent control knob assembly with reduced tactile effort for controlling the position of a vane for an air vent in an automotive vehicle. The vane D includes a front edge A that is arcuate (see FIG. 2), and an opposed rear edge B having only one

notch C formed in the rear edge B. The control knob 12 includes an outer surface, and an inner surface 14 that defines a recess for receiving the vane. A first portion of the inner surface is adjacent a rear edge of the vane, and a second portion of the inner surface is adjacent the front edge of the vane. The knob also includes a side having a portion 16 that is open, for receiving the vane within the recess. The recess defined by the inner surface of the knob is slightly larger than a perimeter defining the outer surface of the vane, so that the knob snaps onto the vane, to fittingly engage the knob onto the vane. A compressively resilient silicone pad 18 is received into the one notched portion C of the rear edge B of the vane D. The pad extends beyond the rear edge B to contact the first portion 20 of the inner surface of the knob 12. The pad constantly forces the front edge A of the vane to be in continuous contact with the second portion 22 of the inner surface of the knob at all times, so that the control knob and vane move together during operation of the control knob from side to side in a longitudinal direction to reduce tactile effort. The compressive resilient pad maintains a constant resistive force on the vane with respect to the knob. Claim 10 is similar to claim 7, and includes further limitations.

The reference does not teach or otherwise suggest the claimed invention of claims 7 and 10 as amended. The Korean reference merely teaches a knob having a recessed portion and a notch in an inner surface of the recessed portion and a shock absorbing material disposed in the notch, so that a rear side of the shock absorbing material is in contact with a front side of the vane. The Korean reference further teaches that the shock absorbing material is compressed when the knob is operated in a side-to-side direction, to reduce the force applied by the operator to the knob, and absorb shock due to operation of the knob. The Korean reference does not disclose a vane having one notch in a rear edge of the control vane and a compressively resilient pad disposed in the one notch that applies a constant and continuous resistive force on the knob

with respect to the vane (in the opposite direction than the force applied by the operator), so that when the knob is operated in a side-to-side direction, a decreased resistance or effort is perceived by the operator, as disclosed by the Applicant. The Korean reference solves the problem of absorbing the force applied by the operator and does not solve the problem of uneven resistance or effort or high resistance or effort perceived by an operator during operation of the knob, that the Applicant's invention solves. Therefore, a knob with a notch for receiving a compressively resistant pad is simply not the same structure as a vane with a notch in a rear edge for receiving a compressively resilient pad, nor do the knob assemblies function in the same way or manner.

The Examiner argues that it would be obvious at the time the invention was made for one skilled in the art to position the pad in one notch in the rear edge of the vane and extending outwardly beyond the rear end of the vane to contact a first portion of the inner surface of the knob as opposed to the pad being disposed in a notch of the knob. The Examiner further states that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have made such a modification. The Examiner cites *In re Einstein*, 8 USPQ 167 as holding that a mere reversal of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. The Applicant submits that a mere reversal of the essential working parts of this device would involve the positioning of the pad in a notch in a rear end of the knob, and not in the rear end of the vane as suggested by the Examiner. Even assuming that the pad could be positioned in a notch in a rear end of the knob, such a reversal is not trivial and would completely change the operation, function and structure of the knob assembly. The Applicant is solving the problem of maintaining a consistent resistant force during operation of the knob assembly by an operator from side to side that provides an acceptable tactile feel to the operator,

especially if the vane is curved. The problem that the Korean reference solves is that of providing a shock absorbing material to absorb shock due to operation of the knob.

The unobvious feature of the present invention is the positioning of the compressively resilient pad within the one notch in the rear edge of the vane, and extending beyond the rear edge, in order to **constantly and consistently** force the front edge of the vane into continuous contact with the second portion of the inner surface of the knob to maintain a constant resistive force during operation of the knob assembly and thus improve the tactile feel of the knob assembly. The Applicant submits that there is no teaching in the prior art cited by the Examiner to suggest the structure taught by the Applicant having this same function of maintaining a consistent resistive force on the knob during operation of the knob in a side-to-side manner. Clearly, the purpose of the resistive pad taught by the Korean reference is to absorb the force applied by an operator when the knob is operated to prevent breaking of the knob or separation of the knob from the vane.

Since the Korean reference is solving a different problem than the problem solved by the Applicant, Applicant's invention is not obvious in view of the Korean reference. The Applicant provides a new and novel vent control knob for an air vent that provides consistent operation and a positive tactile feel to the user as a result of the consistent resistive force due to the placement of the pad with respect to the vane and knob. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 7 and 10 as amended and the claims dependent therefrom are allowable over the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Based on the above, Applicant submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner finds to the contrary, it is respectfully

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requested that the undersigned in charge of this application be called at the telephone number given below to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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